

# BEREANISM

DETECTED:

15 1836  
WHEREIN THAT ARTICLE IN THE  
BEREAN CREED;

VIZ.

That a believer in no period of his life, can entertain the smallest doubt of his interest in CHRIST; is fully refuted from the word of GOD; together with a few hints of the experience of the Author, &c.

By A. MACGREGOR, Teacher of FENCING.

I CORINTHIANS XI. 19.

*For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.*


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## TO THE PUBLIC.

**T**HE Subject here treated of is confined into a narrow compass; in order to make it an easy purchase; therefore it cannot be expected that the matter is so fully discussed and cleared up, as it might have been in a larger volume; nevertheless, I hope it will give satisfaction to the unprejudiced reader.

I know very well that it is an easy thing to pretend faults where there are but few or none, and a very common thing to cry down books, without ever going further than the title page, which is a very discommendable custom, tho' daily practised by some, who pretend to be great judges of books; but before a man approve of a book or condemn it, he ought to peruse it; therefore I expect this justice from all, especially from the unprejudiced, that before they condemn this book, they will take the trouble to peruse it thoroughly: neither is it your approbation only that I want reader, but your conversion; for if you are an unregenerate person, there are several places in this book that will seem very mysterious unto you; and I put no doubt, but  
you

you will reckon the most if not all that I have said concerning my experience nonsense; nevertheless I shall hope good things of you, altho' I may be mistaken.

THE treatise being but small, will not admit of a large preface, but I shall give you an advice before you go any further; lay down the book, and pray to God to send his spirit into your heart, to let you understand what you read; for some pores and reads the most of their life time, and never understands what they have read, because the spirit is not in them; therefore I hope you will take my advice, not only with regard to this book, but of all good books you shall read hereafter; first pray to God, and my life for it, you will find it turn out to your advantage.

If you happen to reap any benefit by the following discourse, ascribe all the glory to God, and O remember the poor worm in your prayers that penned it. I will say no more, but leave you to peruse the book, and the good Lord take the scales of your eyes, that you may understand what you read, and be benefited by it, which is the fervent prayer of your Christian brother,



A. M.

BERE



BEREANISM DETECTED.

MANY are of opinion that controversy about religion is not beneficial to mankind, for say they, men often get into passions, &c. in arguing about religion; but to these men we may answer, that it is not the use, but the abuse of any thing that makes it unlawful; for the end of controversy is either good or bad, according as it is used; good and lawful when it is used for the glory of God, and a love of truth; especially if it be used without desire of being esteemed above what we are; bad and altogether unlawful, when it is used to support heresies, cozen and deceive, for vain glory, or to be esteemed above what is meet and honest. But to bring all this home to our present purpose, because some use arguments unlawfully, or gets into a passion, will

it

it follow, that therefore the use of them is utterly unlawful, I suppose no sincere Christian will say so. If our forefathers had been of that opinion, and had not wrote against the errors of the church, we might have been all papists to this day : but the truth is, that those people who have such an aversion to controversy about religion, care not much about religion; for they will not take the trouble to search and find out, whether their religion be right or wrong, true or false : for when they hear a sermon, if it be delivered with any sort of life and vivacity by the preacher, all is gospel with them, and the doctrine of free will goes as well down with them, as the doctrine of predestination.

I THINK it is a duty incumbent upon every Christian, to be fully perswaded in his own mind, whether the religion he professes, be according to the word of God or not ; for I reckon the scriptures the touch stone, to try people's faith by ; and if upon examination he finds



finds his religion will stand the test, and that he is not setting rules for his Maker to walk by, but chearfully walks according to the rules that God hath laid down for him to walk by, and feels something within, answerable to the word without, and that the commandments is no longer a burthen to him, but that he delights in the law of God after the inward man, and feels a love for his Saviour, and a love for the brethren ; I think I may safely say to such a one, that he knows the voice of Christ ; and consequently he will be enabled to try the spirits, whether they be of God or not, as there are many false prophets gone out into the world. The present time affords us an instance of many false prophets being amongst us ; some denying predestination, and the perseverance of the saints \* ; others denying the sacraments, and most impudently and impiously hides their venom under the

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\* The Arminians or Methodists deny this doctrine, and many other precious truths,

the name and title of the Holy Spirit †; some denying that the saints have sometimes doubts and fears, concerning their salvation ‡; and to crown all, some deny the divinity of the eternal Jesus, who is God over all, blessed for ever §: and what is still more shocking, to think that this is done by some of the ministers of our own church.

MANY of my religious acquaintances, who were deeply humbled at the present state of the church, has often told me they were afraid that there was a storm a-coming: Indeed I cannot say that matters look well at present, for all manner of wickedness is going on, and that to a great height, Satan's kingdom is advancing, and there are a number of Judases among the true disciples of Jesus, doing all the mischief they can

† The Quakers deny the sacraments, &c.

‡ The Bereans deny that the saints have doubts and fears, &c.

§ The Socinians deny the divinity of Christ.

can and leading captive silly souls, and if it were possible, they would even deceive the elect themselves : but glory be to God that it is out of their power to ruin one soul that Jesus died for, for he must see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied, and none shall be able to pluck them out of his hands, for they know his voice, but a stranger they will not follow.

IN the meantime, let me advise the godly to look sharp about them, and beware of those false prophets, be continually in the way of duty, remember who you belong to, and whose servants you are, be always putting up your petitions to the King of Kings, praying that his presence may be with you, and that he may enable you to contend for the truth once delivered to the saints, let the consequence be what it will ; suppose you should gain the ill will of worldlings, you must not mind that, they hate your master, therefore they cannot love you : remember what Saul  
did



did although he knew that both him and his sons were to fall in battle, yet he did not offer to stay back, in case of creating faint-heartedness or confusion among the men, but went and headed his army, and died like a soldier; by how much more so ought you to be zealous for the cause of Christ, when you know that you shall overcome your enemies at last; therefore fear not, for they that be with us, are more than they that be against us.

Much opposition I have met with from worldlings, in different periods of my life; for I was always upon the look out in company for the godly, in order to get acquainted with them, and when I found any I was always glad to have a conversation about religion with them; but the worldlings would say, come give over, we don't like controversy about religion, we did not meet here to argue upon it, &c. It is strange to see what an aversion some men have, at the things which belong to their everlasting

verlasting peace; poor men they are  
 much to be pitied, how their conduct  
 agrees with the following passages of  
 scripture, let the reader determine;  
 1 Pet. iii. 15. *But sanctify the Lord God  
 in your hearts; and be ready always to  
 give an answer to every man that asketh  
 you a reason of the hope that is in you,  
 with meekness and fear.* 1 Thess. v. 21.  
*Prove all things, hold fast that which  
 is good,* Mark viii. 38. *Whosoever there-  
 fore shall be ashamed of me, and of my  
 words, in this adulterous and sinful ge-  
 neration, of him also shall the son of man  
 be ashamed when he cometh in the glory  
 of his Father, with the holy angels.* I  
 have always observed this in the whole  
 course of my life-time, that a person  
 that was willing to learn, would always  
 listen with an attentive ear, when he  
 heard people talking about religion in  
 order to draw instruction. For altho'  
 the Almighty's people is not all endow-  
 ed with talents to argue for him; yet  
 they are endowed with a love to him,  
 a love to the truth, and a love to his  
 commandments

commandments, and they love to be instructed.

I NOW proceed to give the reader an account of a controversy I had about religion, with a Berean Preacher in the town of Dundee, the 7th of June, 1788. ; and how I happened to get acquainted with him, and came to talk about his principles, the reader will see by the following narrative.

WHEN I came to Dundee last May, I was at a loss for a place to teach in, I was recommended by a well-wisher, to apply to Mr JOHN WHITTET Baker, who was a Berean preacher ; the reader will please to take notice, that he was not a learned man, but had just got common education, and the most of the Berean preachers have no more : accordingly I spoke to Mr Whittet about the place, and he set it to me ; but I had to take the key sometimes to his house, it being the same place they held their meetings ; I used sometimes  
to

to talk with him about religion, being fond to know his principles ; but I did not chuse to be too forward to ask him, till we should be better acquainted ; but I found he was a great enemy to the church of Scotland, for I told him I was a member of it.

He used often to exclaim against the clergy ; and said they had substituted a number of words, that they could not explain properly ; particularly the word substance ; for he said, that when that word was applied to any thing else but God, people could understand it ; but says he, when they apply it to God, I do not understand it : the reader will please to take notice, that for as much carping as he made against this word and some others, I never heard him substitute any other in place of them, or tell what words he thought would be better : but I came to understand this man's principles better afterwards : one day in particular, being in company with two brother teachers, we sent for

Mr Whittet about some business I had with him, and he came to us ; they both spoke in my favour concerning the business he and I had together, but found it to no purpose. How the Berean used me after this contrary to our bargain and agreement, I don't chuse to relate, but will proceed to what passed concerning religion. One of the gentlemen told Mr Whittet to take care what he said or did before me ; for said he, he marks every thing down, and he is determined to publish a book concerning his remarks : the gentlemen knew that I was going to put out a book indeed, but I suppose it was to get Mr Whittet to speak about religion, that he told him so ; for I had told the gentleman before, that I wished to know the Bereans principles, for I was entirely ignorant of them.

Mr WHITTET asked me if I marked down every days transactions, I told him that it was according to what happened ; says he by way of a mock, will  
you



you mark down us four drinking beer to day; I told him that would not be worth while; but that I had seen as much as that I would get something to mark down before we parted. We then began to talk on some other topic, and continued for some time; but at last a discourse did begin about religion, and as no person in company said come give over, we did not meet here to talk about religion, the discourse went on. The Berean having most to say himself, it would be tedious besides superfluous to relate all the arguments that this man and I had, but I shall take notice of a few of them here, in order to give the reader a sketch of them, which together with the answer I sent to the Berean, will enable the reader to form some idea of their doctrine.

AFTER he had gone on for some time, lashing away against the church of Scotland more from malice than his knowledge, I thought it was high time for me to bestir myself; I told him that

it did not become him or any man to speak so much against the clergy ; for I said if it had not been for them we would have been ill off, for we could not have read the scriptures, unless they had translated them into our own language, and that we certainly were very much obliged to them for that, an argument that few takes notice of ; he said that we would have had them translated independent of the clergy, &c. He still continued to lash away against them, and spoke against some words that they had substituted, &c. ; and he spoke something against the Confession of Faith, the Westminster Divines, &c. ; I told him that there was such a number of divines met at Westminster, charity would make a person think that a number of them belonged to God, and consequently they would do what they could for his service ; and as they were all learned men and knew the original languages, they certainly were the best judges, and knew better what words to substitute than any ignorant man, that  
did

did not know the languages ; he said perhaps they might not be right, as there were eight hundred and fifty prophets of Baal on one side, and there was but one on the other side ; (and he was right, meaning Elijah :) the reader may see what sort of an argument this was that he brought against me ; I told him however good that argument might be in other cases, yet it could have no weight in the present case, as these eight hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, were met for the service of the Devil, but the Westminster Divines met for the service of the true God. Many arguments he brought against me of the like nature in the course of our conversation, and attacked me very uncharitably concerning my experience, which I would not have been at the trouble to take notice of, or write any thing concerning it, but it is for what follows that caused me to write against him.

WE then came to talk about the faith of assurance, and I maintained that some

had the faith of assurance, he told me that I was not a right bairn of the church of Scotland, otherwise I would not say so; I told him that the church did hold forth that doctrine, but taught also, that believers in different periods of their life might be in doubts and fears concerning their salvation, which he flatly denied, and said that it was impossible for any believer ever to doubt of his salvation; and he maintained that the clergy of the church were all wrong in that, for they had no scripture for it, &c. I told him I could confirm the truth of a believer's being in doubts and fears by my own experience, &c.; he said my experience might be a delusion of Satan; I told him that sin often shakes the believer's faith, but he said if a man's faith was shaken for sin, & was strong when he came to behave well again, that it shewed plainly he had no recourse to the blood of Christ, but to his own works, &c. : But to come to a conclusion, he said that there never was a believer from the creation of the world

world to the present time, that ever doubted of his salvation, and he defied me to prove the contrary from scripture; for he said it was impossible for any man to doubt of his salvation and be a believer at the same time, and took the two gentlemen witnesses to what he had asserted: I told him that I would prove from scripture that believers had doubted of their salvation, and send it to him in writing, so we parted.

HERE I got something to put down in my remarks for as great a mock as the Berean made of them, (see page 15.) After the Berean had left us, the two gentlemen said that he had really argued well, and they thought he had rather the better of me, &c.; but when I spoke to them deliberately and bid them take a serious thought about the Berean doctrine, they could not in conscience but say they thought that even a very good man might doubt of his salvation; but one of them was more fully convinced that the Berean doctrine



trine was erroneous in a few days after, when he conversed with a minister of the church of Scotland upon the subject, for the minister let him know that I was right. Next day being sabbath, I went and heard Mr Whittet and some of his brethren preach, and I found they all held forth the same doctrine that Mr Whittet maintained the day before; but I took particular notice of Mr Whittet's discourse: In the course of his preaching, he said what sort of people are those after they have fallen into sins and temptations begin to doubt and fear, & after they have behaved for sometime well again they then have confidence in God; where is the blood of Christ in this respect said he, they have no recourse to the blood of Christ, but to their own works, &c. I took notice to this subtle argument of his and have answered it in place fit for it. In a day or two after this I began to think with myself what method I would fall upon to answer this Berean according as I had promised; but before I did any thing

thing in the matter, I thought it would be proper to ask counsel of the Lord, accordingly I besought the Lord to direct me, what method would be most proper and agreeable to his will, to answer this man : for I was fully convinced in my own mind, that the doctrine I meant to defend was according to the word of God, and that the Berean doctrine was erroneous, and as the good Lord had stood by me, and enabled me to defend the truth in former times against its opposers, I begged that he would once more countenance me with his blessed and glorious presence, which had often afforded me more solid comfort and joy than all the world could have done ; and that he might enable me to defend the doctrine I maintained, particularly as I was to send it in writing to one who was a profest enemy against it ; and that he might bless the undertaking, that it might be a mean through his blessing of doing good, and of preventing poor silly souls from being harmed by the Berean doctrine.

I found

I FOUND a great calmness of mind, and indeed I was pretty well assured his presence would be with me, so that I was enabled to put my trust in God so firmly and assuredly that he would be with me, that I set to the work most courageously. I had recourse to the book of books first, I mean the bible, and I found a number of places in the psalms very much to my purpose; but I wished to have more examples than of David only: I examined Calvin on the nature of faith, and I found that he had taken notice of David in a more emphatic manner than I had done, but still I wanted to have more upon this point. It still run in my mind that it was more fully set down, and the matter better discussed in some book that I had read: I paused a while and considered, and remembered that it was in Mr Isaac Ambrose's works, which I got and examined the scriptures there cited more narrowly, and found the matter discussed to my hand: there were some places wrong, owing to  
the

the error of the press I suppose ; but I found out the right places : all this being done, I then began to consider what steps I should take next in order to make the work more compleat ; after mature deliberation I thought it would not be improper to mark down a few hints of my experience, in order to shew the Berean that I did not argue against him merely from books or from hearsay ; for that would be like a man born blind, from books being read to him and instructions, describing the nature of the sun, although he himself had never seen that sun he had been describing, those who have been born again will understand what I mean more clearly.

After I had subjoined a few hints of my own experience, I thought it would not be improper to have some other persons opinion on the subject that I could depend upon ; accordingly I went and called for a  
 young

young man a student of divinity that I was acquainted with, who was of a ready wit; I told him of the controversy I had with Mr Whittet, and begged of him that he would write something upon the subject for me to insert, as I knew he was more able to refute the Bereans than I was; he consented and went with me to my room, but I did not tell him what I had done towards it, because I wanted to have his opinion by itself, as well as to try his genius: without giving him any assistance he began and wrote a sheet of paper extemporary, without having recourse to any author.

WHEN I examined it, I found that I had made use of some of his arguments against the Bereans when we were arguing together, others of them I had not, which is very strong arguments in defence of the doctrine of doubts and fears. A day or two after this I put the whole together,  
and



and arranged it according to my liking ; but sure am I that I had the presence of God along with me, from the first to the last of this work. I then went to the young man and shewed him all that I had done, and it met with his sanction ; after which I shewed it to a number of my religious acquaintances, and they all agreed in their opinions that it was sufficient to convince any unbiaſſed mind ; and they ſaid that I ſhould print it, and that I would be very much to blame if I did not, as it might be a mean thro' God's bleſſing of doing good, as the Bereans had done a deal of harm by their doctrine to many poor ſouls ; and they adviſed me alſo, to write the different paſſages of ſcripture at large, that I had only cited the number of the chapter and verſe as it is in Ambroſe, for fear that ſome might not take the trouble to look into their bibles to examine them, and conſequently that they would loſe the meaning and ſubſtance of the matter ; and they told me they would

subscribe for it in order to defray my expences. This was rather against my plan, for I did not intend to publish any detached piece, but rather intended to keep a double of it by me, and put it among the rest of my remarks in place fit for it, but finding that I would disoblige a number of my religious acquaintances if I did not print this small treatise, I consented to do it, so according to their importunities I have fulfilled my promise, and God of his infinite mercy grant, that it may be a mean of doing good to many.

If what falls from my pen under the divine blessing, should be a mean of bringing but one soul to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, it would sufficiently recompence me for my labour. In the meantime, let me take notice of some opposition that I met with, by some who were against my publishing this small treatise: after I had made my copy ready for the press, I got the proposals wrote, in order to let

let the people understand what the subject was ; and it was in the proposals also, that I had compiled the ideas of Ambrose and Calvin, together with the sentiments of a young divine, upon the subject, with a few hints of my own experience, &c. Some said that I might have had recourse to better authors, than Calvin or Ambrose ; but to such people I shall only say this, that they have not read Calvin or Ambrose, otherwise they have not understood what they read ; others said I should not have had recourse to any divine, and some said that I should not have mentioned any thing concerning my experience, &c. the reader will see my reason for this last elsewhere. But I knew full well, that it would be impossible for me to please all ; however, I hope I shall please some, and if so, I have gained my end.

At first I intended that this piece should cost but threepence, but as I enlarged it afterwards, I have made the

price sixpence ; but I hope that will be no obstacle to those who subscribed for it when the proposals bound them to pay but three-pence, although I intend to make no more mistakes of this kind afterwards. I know that I should have printed this six months ago, but my bad state of health, and other obstacles coming in the way, prevented me till now : so I shall say no more at present, but leave the reader to peruse the following answer which I sent to the Berean.

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*A Copy of the Answer, which I sent to*  
 Mr JOHN WHITTET, BAKER,  
*in DUNDEE.*

S I R,

**W**HEN I seriously consider the arguments that you and I had, on Saturday the 7th of June, last,  
 I cannot

I cannot but be surprized that our arguments were so confused, for it was some time before I could understand what your principles were; or what point of doctrine you meant to maintain, &c. You know I maintained that some had the faith of assurance; and you said that I was not a right bairn of the church, or I would not say so, &c. I told you that the church of Scotland did hold forth that doctrine; but taught also, that even those who had the faith of assurance might be left at some period of their life, so as to doubt of their salvation; and I told you that I knew the truth of this doctrine by my own experience, &c. You told me you did not regard my experience, or any man's experience, but you would believe the scriptures; for you said my experience might be a delusion of Satan, as he has different ways of working upon people's hearts; and you gave me an instance of the apostle Paul, that while he was persecuting the saints he thought he was doing a great service to God, &c.

and



and you told me, that Satan might delude me also; I told you to beware of what you said, and not to impute that to be done by Satan, which was done by the spirit of God, &c. For before you say that a man's experience is a delusion of Satan, you should first be sure that it is so, and not say that a person's experience is a delusion of the Devil, because his opinion is not the same as yours about matters of religion; and I think it will not follow that my experience was a delusion of the Devil, for defending a doctrine which the godly have experienced in all ages. Now, you that pretends to have such a great veneration for the scriptures, what do you think they treat most of? even this, the life and experience of the saints. And if you are so foolish, as think that no man has had any experience that is worth the regarding since the New Testament was wrote, unless he was of your opinion, you are in a gross mistake: for the Lord Jesus has had witnesses of different sectaries in religion, that

that has experienced his love in every age ; and he will have them till time shall be no more.

It is needless for me to be repeating every thing which you said that day, as you seemed rather to be arguing for being accounted a wise man, than for the glory of God ; therefore, I shall pass these things, and come to the point in hand. You know it came to this at last, that you maintained that a believer never doubted of his salvation ; or in other words, that after a man was once made a real believer, suppose he did fall into great sins, yet he would never in any period of his life doubt of his salvation ; for you said that no man could be a believer, and doubt of his salvation at the same time : and you said that I could not prove that any saint ever had doubted of his salvation from scripture ; and you took Messrs Bain and Gaul witnesses to what you said : I told you that I would shew you from scripture, that believers had doubted :

so

so according to promise, I have here brought together such passages of scripture, and such arguments; as I think will sufficiently prove, that saints have doubted of their salvation. But I beg your attention for a few moments, to what a young divine says upon the subject, now under discussion.

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*A few hints wrote by a young DIVINE,  
upon the Subject.*

**T**HAT almost every thing necessary to be known is clearly explained in scripture, I most firmly believe; but it is equally true, that the figurative phraseology and seeming inconsistencies of holy writ, need much explanation. So fully convinced of this were the primitive Christians, that no man was constituted a presbyter, till he had gone thro' all or most of the inferior offices of the house of God. [See Bingham's church history.] But men now-a-days  
are smitten

smitten so dreadfully with the itch of  
 speaking in public, that they must needs  
 become expositors, though fit only for  
 doorkeepers. To this plague of the  
 tongue must be attributed the many  
 gross absurdities and perversions of  
 scripture, which are for ever sounding  
 in our ears. One tells us there cannot be  
 three persons in one God, because it im-  
 plies a contradiction. Another, that we  
 have no connection with original sin, be-  
 cause we did not consent to Adam's be-  
 coming our representative. 'Twould  
 be just as good sense to say, I have no  
 connection with the earth, because I  
 did not consent to be formed of the  
 dust. But the horrid absurdity which  
 I at present intend to confute is, that  
 true believers are all possessed of the  
 faith of assurance; or, in other words,  
 that no saint, in no period of his life,  
 can have any doubts of his future hap-  
 piness. To expose the nakedness of  
 this doctrine, I observe in the first  
 place, that a perfect assurance of God's  
 love is diametrically opposite to the  
 present

present situation of mankind. This life is a state of probation, in which we are trained up by degrees for the full enjoyment of God in the mansions of eternal glory. Now, if in this life perfection of holiness is unattainable, of consequence it cannot afford perfect happiness; and therefore it refuses the weary passenger absolute assurance, which is reserved for him in heaven. *When that which is perfect is come, then that which is now in part shall be done away.*

In the second place, I shall condescend on such passages of scripture as clearly evince the truth of this point; that believers often doubt of their interest in Christ. St Paul says of himself, *I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away.* If there be not doubts expressed here, and that in the most emphatic language, let the modern sticklers for absolute assurance determine.

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If he feared lest, after all, he might be a cast-away, then he had not full assurance; but if he spoke this by the bye only, and still knew that he could not possibly be a cast-away, then he spoke downright nonsense; for he supposed according to the opinion of my opponents, what in the very nature of things was impossible. How will this agree with the opinion we must entertain of Paul's good sense, as educated at the feet of Gamaliel? But most of all, how will it accord with the unerring language of an inspired apostle? It were to be wished that men would think before they speak, and not expose their folly in such a glaring manner.

My opponents say, can believers doubt of God's ability to save? I answer no, for he is omnipotent. *None can stay his almighty arm from working, neither dare any say unto him, what dost thou?* They ask again, is it possible for them to doubt his willingness to save? I answer no, if they indulge a moments reflection

reflection ; for the whole of the divine œconomy exhibited in the redemption of a lost world loudly proclaims this truth. *Christ also is able to save to the very uttermost, all who come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.* And to doubt his willingness is equally absurd, for he endured the contradiction of sinners against himself ; submitted to the wrath of God, the rage of devils, and mockery of men, and at last agonized upon the cross, to put his love for fallen man beyond dispute. All this being granted, they roundly conclude that the doctrine of doubts and fears is a wicked invention of man. However, tho' God and Christ are both able and willing to save, and though it be declared that *he who believeth shall be saved*, yet I shall make it appear that true believers may, at different periods of their life, have their evidence of future happiness much impaired. Observe, I grant that the grounds of doubting are not in God or Christ, and therefore they  
must

must be in ourselves. From the nature and perfections of Jehovah, the example of the blessed Jesus, and the uniform tenor of scripture, we are informed that the unholy cannot see the face of God in mercy. *Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.* Indeed it is impossible that an unrenewed mind could relish the spiritual employment, and pure fruition of the new Jerusalem. Besides, it is constantly declared in the volume of inspiration, that genuine faith cannot exist without good works. That is, without a religious contempt of all earthly enjoyments, a love to all the commandments of God, and a perfect abhorrence of every sin. Now the Almighty having inseparably connected faith and works together, when the Christian falls at any time into the commission of evil, he has every reason to call in question the reality of his faith, and consequently his interest in Christ. This is an argument so strong, that I defy the whole universe to confute it, except they can prove that true

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faith can exist without the fruits of righteousness, which is no better than the faith of infernal spirits. Paul says to the Christians, *be not high minded, but fear*. Fear what? That God cannot save? No! That he will not save? No! both these are unconnected with the Apostle's meaning. What then does he bid them fear? Undoubtedly the commission of evil, and consequently cautions them against the diminishing of their comfort and assurance; which every failure in duty must do, being repugnant to true faith, which works by love, and purifies the heart. But say my opponents, if the commission of sin diminishes assurance, then the practice of piety must strengthen it, and of consequence every believer is his own Saviour. I admit the premises, but I flatly deny the conclusion. Sin of every kind must diminish the believer's comfort, because it reasonably makes him call his faith in question; and the practice of holiness must give him assurance of God's love, because it is the necessary



necessary fruit of faith; but it cannot make him his own Saviour, because infinite wrath can never be appeased by the obedience of a finite creature. If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain. In a word, every man who perceives not his life and conversation such in every point as God himself has declared will flow from true faith, has not only reason to doubt whether he has any faith, but according to our Lord's beautiful language, may even set himself down an unbeliever, let his opinion of his own faith be ever so great. Matth. xii. 34, 35. *O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man, out of the good treasure of the heart, bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure, bringeth forth evil things.* The believer cannot save himself by his good works, when at the very best he is only an unprofitable servant, but his good works convince him that he has not



believed in vain. I confess, some poor souls may be so strongly deluded as to think they are possessed of the faith of God's operation, while their conduct bears not the smallest proportion to it; but this is a spider's web which must break under those who lean to it, and finally transmit them to everlasting perdition. O what an unspeakable disappointment to step into hell big with the hopes of heaven!

1. Doubts and fears are necessary in order to keep us humble. Extraordinary communication of divine goodness are insupportable in this imperfect state. When Paul in a holy extacy was wrapt up to the third heavens, he had almost forgot that he was an inhabitant of the earth, which made God send him a messenger of Satan to buffet him, lest he should be exalted above measure.

2. THEY are necessary in order to make us long for our departure, and wean our affections from the things of a present

a present life. Were we permitted, while in the body, to dwell under the perpetual sunshine of God's countenance, we would soon forget the nature of this world, and instead of taking it for a state of trial, we should think it a paradise. Hence the joys of heaven would lose their relish in a great measure, and our removal to the Canaan above could hardly be deemed by us in the least superior to our present state.

FROM all which it is abundantly plain, that doubts and fears are established in the word of God, and in the providence of God highly necessary, as well as existing in the very nature of things. [*Thus far the Divine.*]

LET us now see what the reformer Calvin says concerning this matter, he gives a number of instances of believers doubting; but I shall confine myself to what he says concerning David only. He says the scripture setteth forth no example of faith more plain, or more

than in David, especially if a man behold the whole continual course of his life. But yet how he was not always of quiet mind, himself declareth by innumerable complaints, of which at this time it shall be sufficient to chuse out a few. When he reproacheth his own soul with troublesome motions, what is it else but that he is angry with his own belief? Psalm xlii. 5. *Why tremblest thou my soul, saith he, and why art thou disquieted within me? trust in God.* And truly that same discouragement was a plain token of destruction, even as if he thought himself to be forsaken of God. And in another place we read a larger confession thereof, Psalm xxxi. 22. where he saith, *I said in my overthrow, I am cast from the sight of thy eyes.* Also in another place he disputeth with himself in careful and miserable perplexity, yea and quarrelleth of the very nature of God, saying, Psalm lxxvii. 7, 8, 9. *Hath God forgotten to have mercy? will he cast off for ever?* and yet harder is that which followeth

followeth : *But I have said, to die is mine : Charges are of the right hand of the highest.* For as in despair he condemneth himself to destruction, and not only confesseth himself to be tossed with doubting, but as if he were vanquished in battle, he leaveth nothing to himself, because God hath forsaken him, and hath turned to destroy him, the same hand that was wont to be his helper. Wherefore not without cause he exhorteth his *soul to return to her quietness*, Psalm cxvi. 7. because he had found by experience, that he was tossed among troublesome waves, &c. [Calv. Inst. book iii. chap. 2.]

I HAVE likewise examined the works of Mr Isaac Ambrose. And here let me tell you that I found the whole matter discussed to my hand; so that I have nothing to do but to copy it. As Mr Ambrose was one of the members of a Christian society, where this same question was propounded; whether a true believer may not sometimes doubt?

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and what are the several causes of doubting? It was answered, that without controversy, and as the following texts will evidence, a true believer may doubt of his salvation; and the causes are these:

1. THE prosperity of the wicked, Psalm xxxviii. 17. 'For I am ready  
' to halt, and my sorrow is continu-  
' ally before me; and lxxiii. 2, 3,  
' 4, 5, 12. But as for me my feet  
' were almost gone; my steps had well  
' nigh slipt. For I was envious at the  
' foolish, when I saw the prosperity of  
' the wicked. For there are no bands  
' in their death; but their strength is  
' firm. They are not in trouble as o-  
' ther men; neither are they plagued  
' like other men. Behold, these are the  
' ungodly who prosper in the world,  
' they increase in riches. Verily, I have  
' cleansed my heart in vain, and washed  
' my hands in innocence.' (2.) His  
own want of necessary provisions for  
this life, Numb. xx. 3, 4, 5. 'And  
' the



' the people chode with Moses, and  
 ' spake, saying, would God that we  
 ' had died when our brethren died  
 ' before the Lord. And why have ye  
 ' brought up the congregation of the  
 ' Lord into this wilderness, that we and  
 ' our cattle should die there? And  
 ' wherefore have ye made us to come  
 ' out of Egypt, to bring us into this  
 ' evil place? It is no place of seed,  
 ' or of figs, or of vines, or of pome-  
 ' granates, neither is there any water to  
 ' drink.' (3.) Suspension of divine favour,

Job. xiii. 24. ' Wherefore hidest thou  
 ' thy face, and holdest me for thine e-  
 ' nemy? Psalm lxxvii. 7, 8, 9. ' Will  
 ' the Lord cast of for ever? and will he  
 ' be favourable no more? Is his mercy  
 ' clean gone for ever? Doth his promise  
 ' fail for evermore? Hath God forgot-  
 ' ten to be gracious? hath he in anger  
 ' shut up his tender mercies? selah.

(4.) Imminent dangers and fears, Ex.  
 xiv. 10, 11, 12. ' And when Pharaoh  
 ' drew nigh, the children of Israel lift up  
 ' their eyes, and behold the Egyptians  
 ' marched

' marched after them, and they were  
 ' fore afraid: and the children of Is-  
 ' rael cried out unto the Lord. And  
 ' they said unto Moses, because there  
 ' were no graves in Egypt, hast thou  
 ' taken us away to die in the wilderness?  
 ' Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with  
 ' us, to carry us forth out of Egypt?  
 ' Is not this the word that we did tell  
 ' thee in Egypt, saying, let us alone,  
 ' that we may serve the Egyptians? For  
 ' it had been better for us to serve the  
 ' Egyptians, than that we should die in  
 ' the wilderness. Matth. viii. 25, 26,  
 ' And his disciples came to him and a-  
 ' woke him, saying, Lord save us, we  
 ' perish. And he saith unto them, why  
 ' are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?  
 ' Then he arose, and rebuked the winds  
 ' and the sea, and there was a great  
 ' calm; and xiv. 30, 31. But when  
 ' he saw the wind boisterous, he was  
 ' afraid; and beginning to sink, he  
 ' cried, saying, Lord save me. And  
 ' immediately Jesus stretched forth his  
 ' hand, and caught him, and said unto  
 ' him

‘ him, O thou of little faith, wherefore  
 ‘ didst thou doubt ?’ (5.) Apprehensi-  
 ons of God’s denying his prayers, Psal.  
 xxii. 1, 2. ‘ My God, my God, why  
 ‘ hast thou forsaken me ? why art thou  
 ‘ so far from helping me, and from the  
 ‘ words of my roaring ? O my God, I  
 ‘ cry in the day time, but thou hearest  
 ‘ not ; and in the night season, and am  
 ‘ not silent.’ (6.) The afflicting hand  
 of God lying sore on his soul ; Psalm  
 cxvi. 10. 11. ‘ I believed, therefore  
 ‘ have I spoken ; I was greatly afflicted.  
 ‘ I said in my haste, all men are liars.  
 Lam 3, 17, 18 ; ‘ And thou hast remov-  
 ‘ ed my soul far off from peace : I for-  
 ‘ gat prosperity. And I said, my  
 ‘ strength and my hope is perished  
 ‘ from the Lord.’ (7.) Mistaken ap-  
 prehensions and weakness of judgment :  
 Matth xiv. 26. ‘ And when the dis-  
 ‘ ciples saw him walking on the sea,  
 ‘ they were troubled, and said it is a  
 ‘ spirit ; and they cried out for fear :  
 ‘ Mark vi. 49, 50 ; But when they saw  
 ‘ him walking upon the sea, they sup-  
 ‘ posed

' posed it had been a spirit, and cried  
 ' out : (For they all saw him, and were  
 ' troubled;) And immediately he talk-  
 ' with them, and saith unto them, be  
 ' of good cheer, it is I: be not afraid;  
 ' Luke xxiv. 37: But they were terri-  
 ' fied and affrighted, and supposed that  
 ' they had seen a spirit.' (8.) Relaps-  
 es or re-insnarements into former sins;  
 Psalm li: 8, 12: 'Make me to hear joy  
 ' and gladness: that the bones which  
 ' thou hast broken may rejoice. Restore  
 ' unto me the joy of thy salvation: and  
 ' uphold me with thy free spirit.' (9.)  
 The littleness or smalness of faith;  
 Matth xiv: 30; 'But when he saw the  
 ' wind boisterous, he was afraid; and  
 ' beginning to sink, he cried, saying,  
 ' Lord save me; Mark ix. 24; And  
 ' straightway, the father of the child  
 ' cried out, and said with tears, Lord,  
 ' I believe; help thou mine unbelief.'  
 (10.) A poring on, or studying too  
 much the life of sense; Luke i: 18, 19  
*20: And Zacharias said unto the Angel,*  
*whereby shall I know this? for I am an*  
*old*

old man, & my wife well stricken in years  
 And the angel answering said unto him,  
 I am Gabriel that stand in the presence  
 of God: and am sent to speak unto thee,  
 and to shew thee these glad tidings, and  
 behold thou shalt be dumb, and not able  
 to speak, until the day that these things  
 shall be performed, because thou believest  
 not my words, which shall be fulfilled  
 in their season. John xx. 5. And he  
 stooping down, and looking in, saw the  
 linen clothes lying; yet went he not in.

( 11. ) A want of the true understanding  
 of some divine mysteries, John vi.  
 60. ‘ Many therefore of his disciples,  
 ‘ when they had heard this, said, this  
 ‘ is an hard saying, who can hear it? ’

( 12. ) A distrusting of God’s promises  
 upon human reports. Numb. xiii. 32,  
 33. ‘ And they brought up an evil re-  
 ‘ port of the land which they had search-  
 ‘ ed, unto the children of Israel, say-  
 ‘ ing, the land through which we have  
 ‘ gone to search it, is a land that eat-  
 ‘ eth up the inhabitants thereof: and  
 ‘ all the people that we saw in it are

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‘ men



‘ men of a great stature. And there  
 ‘ we saw the giants the sons of Anak,  
 ‘ which came of the giants : and we  
 ‘ were in our own sight as grasshoppers,  
 ‘ and so we were in their sight ; and  
 ‘ xiv. 1, 2, 3. And all the congregati-  
 ‘ on lifted up their voice, and cried ;  
 ‘ and the people wept that night. And  
 ‘ all the children of Israel murmured  
 ‘ against Moses, and against Aaron :  
 ‘ and the whole congregation said unto  
 ‘ them, would God that we had died  
 ‘ in the land of Egypt, or would God  
 ‘ that we had died in this wilderness.  
 ‘ And wherefore hath the Lord brought  
 ‘ us unto this land, to fall by the sword,  
 ‘ that our wives and our children should  
 ‘ be a prey ? were it not better for us  
 ‘ to return into Egypt,’ &c. [Ambrose  
 Media. page 193.]

I NOW proceed to give you a few  
 hints of my own experience ; for altho’  
 you don’t regard people’s experience,  
 yet let me tell you, that I always found  
 my own inward experience to prove  
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the best commentary unto me. For instance, why should I doubt of the sense of such passages of scripture as are really practical, and contain in them necessary truths? for as Ambrose says; surely every man that is sanctified and illuminated by the spirit of grace, will find something within, answerable to that word without, which will clear up the meaning.

Now I know to my experience that I have been often in doubts and fears, wherefore then should I doubt the truth of such passages of scripture, as clearly evinceth that others have been in the same condition. I could have proved this doctrine that I am defending from scripture, without having recourse to any author or divine whatsoever, but that I intended to shew you the opinion of the learned and godly concerning this matter; and indeed it is not only an opinion, but what all the godly feel to their experience; and let me tell you, that I have been taken for a

believer among believers, perhaps you may say that I have deceived them, but let me tell you, that as masons know one another by certain signs and words; & can discern whether a man be really a mason or not; so the godly by a spiritual discerning, are capable to *try the spirits whether they be of God, because many false prophets are gone out into the world,* 1 John iv. 1. But you may say how do I know myself to be a believer? I answer, *by the spirit of God bearing witness with my spirit that I do belong to God,* Rom. viii. 16. I know also *that I have passed from death to life, because I love the brethren,* 1 John iii. 14. I have conversed with many of the godly concerning their spiritual experience and union with Christ, and I have been much benefited by it, and it has delighted me to hear of the sweet union that some of them had with Jesus: yet after all, I have surprized them, when I gave them an account of my conversion, and of the powerful operations of the spirit of God upon  
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my soul; for I found that I had as much union and communion with the lovely Jesus as many I conversed with. I do not repeat this out of pride or ostentation, God forbid I should, but I do it for the glory of the great God, and my Saviour Jesus Christ, who out of love condescends to dwell with me who am a poor sinful worm: I do it also in order to shew you, that after all these powerful operations of the spirit, that I have fallen into doubts and fears; for if I should say, that I had never any doubts or fears about my salvation since I believed, I should be a liar, and the truth would not be in me.

WHEN I conversed with the godly about doubts and fears I had been into, at different periods of my life, they told me that they had been often in the same condition themselves; so we all agreed in this, that we had been often in doubts and fears about our salvation; and that not only when we had fallen into the commission of sin,

but even in the midst of ordinances, and when we were behaving as well as possibly we could, for when the spirit had left us we began to fear we were not belonging to God, for we enjoyed no pleasure in the ordinances, &c; and we have even come that length, so as to pass the sentence of condemnation upon ourselves. But when it pleased God to send the comforter into our hearts, all these doubts and fears were removed from us, we then found pleasure in the ordinances and found our hearts burning with love to Jesus, we put our whole trust in God, and laid hold of the promises, &c.

NEXT let me tell you, that I was converted before I was twelve years of age, the particulars of which would be too tedious to relate here; for I was made as sure of my eternal salvation, as I was sure I was living. But sometime thereafter, I had some doubts and fears concerning my salvation; and particularly in a few years thereafter, when



when in the vigour of youth, I fell into the commission of great sins, which made me not only doubt if I belonged to God, but made me think that my conversion was but a delusion, and that I certainly was a child of Satan, otherwise I could not commit such sins. &c. However it pleased God in his own good time to grant me peace of conscience, after I had been a long time in despair. You say that the doctrine of doubts and fears is nothing but a cunningly devised fable of men, &c; but let me tell you, that at that time I was very ignorant of the principles of the church of Scotland, for I experienced the truth of a Christian being in doubts and fears, before ever I conversed with the godly, or heard any minister say any thing about it to my knowledge, I enjoyed much sweet union with Jesus for a long time after this, but yet how I was not always of quiet mind, the following story will evidence; particularly when I inform you that about two years ago, I was not only in doubts  
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and fears, but I was even tempted to atheism and unbelief, for I doubted if ever there was such a divine person as the Lord Jesus upon earth ; and I even doubted the truth of the New Testament's account of him, &c. I knew in my own mind that this was a temptation of Satan, but what did that signify when I had not power to overcome the temptation. So here was not only doubts and fears about my salvation, but in a manner throwing away my salvation, and in believing Satan rather than God ; so here was unbelief to the highest pitch under heaven ; and I was in this miserable condition for some weeks. But one sabbath evening, in reading the 25 cap B. 3. of Calvin's In. concerning the resurrection of Christ from the dead ; Calvin says that sinners will laugh at the history which the Evangelists rehearse, as at a childish mockery. For of what importance shall the message be which fearful silly women bring, and afterward the disciples confirm, being in a manner

manner astonished. Why did not Christ set up the triumphing ensigns of his victory in the midst of the temple, and the market place? Why came he not forth terrible into the sight of Pilate? &c. But as Calvin says, the disciples saw him oftener than once, and also felt his feet and his hands, &c. And not only this sight was shewed to the eleven Apostles, but also he was seen at once of more than five hundred brethren, 1 Cor. xv. 6. Now when he sent the Holy Ghost, he shewed a sure proof not only of life, but also of the sovereign power. As he had said before, it is profitable for you that I go, otherwise the Holy Ghost shall not come, John xvi. To discredit so many authentic witnesses, is not only a part of distrustfulness, but also of froward and furious stubbornness, &c. In reading these words, now when he sent the Holy Ghost he shewed a sure proof not only of life, but also of the sovereign power, &c.; I was struck with such a divine impulse, of  
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the truth of the Comforter being come, which the godly knew and enjoyed his presence to their sweet comfort; and I knowing myself, that I had enjoyed the presence of the blessed Comforter, times without number; and I was answered from within, and he is within you now testifying to your spirit, that this same Jesus was upon earth and died for you, and why will you doubt more, &c.

THEN was Satan and all his temptations overcome, and beat off by this blessed Comforter, and all doubts were removed, *and I believed on the Lord Jesus from the very heart and soul.* Then did that blessed passage of scripture come into my mind, *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved,* Acts xvi. 31. I found that *I did believe on Jesus from the very heart and soul,* and consequently I was sure to be saved, and accordingly laid hold on the promises. Indeed I wished that God would take me out of the world that same night,

night, for I had fuller assurance that night, than ever I had before. But what do you think I meant by wishing to die that night? 'even this, *that I might be with Jesus, where sin should no more have dominion over me.* For I knew that if I was spared to live, that Satan would still be plaguing me with temptations, and no doubt but some time or other he might gain some advantage of me, and consequently it would shake my faith, and cause me to fall into fresh doubts and fears, &c. I have given you some small account of the operations of the spirit upon me that night; but, had I the tongue of men and angels, I could not tell you all that happened that night, for words cannot express it. - I enjoyed much sweet union and communion with the lovely Jesus after that; but even since that time I have been in grievous doubts and fears, but God delivered me out of them.

BUT the time would fail me to enumerate



numerate all the different encounters that I have had with the devil, the world and the flesh ; and the goodness of God on the other hand, in sending his spirit into my heart, to overcome Satan and his temptations. But I know this, that while I am in the world, I must lay my account with a continual struggling and striving, betwixt the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent : but my request is, that the good Lord will stand by me in the hour of death, and arm me for my last brunt, and I hope he will hear me for the sake of Jesus who died for me

I am now going to take notice of one of your arguments, which you think is a great bulwark against this doctrine. You say that people of my way of thinking after they have fallen into the commission of evil, they then begin to doubt and fear, but that after they have behaved well for some time again, they then have confidence in God, and that they have no recourse  
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to the blood of Christ in this respect, but to their own works: and I grant that if it were so as you say, that they would have no recourse to the blood of Christ: but, whoever pleaded that his confidence proceeded from his own works? No believer I am sure. One may easily run down the best argument in the world, if he takes the liberty to propose the arguments he designs to encounter, in such a manner as they may be most easily answered; but this is not fair, for a man should put down the arguments in his opponents own words, *That a believer after he has fallen into the commission of evil begins to doubt and fear*, I own, for I am not fond of that faith that is not shaken by an unsteady walking; but that he has confidence in God after behaving better, I deny; for I have shewn you already, that a believer may behave well and attend the ordinances, and yet reap no benefit by them; so you see that this argument is of no weight. But I will tell you what a

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believer's confidence proceeds from, it proceeds from the spirit's confirming the pardon of his sins, and testifying to his spirit that God is reconciled with him for Christ's sake. It seems very odd to me, that men will take upon them to preach against a doctrine which the godly feel to be true to their experience in different periods of their life; for your doctrine may do a deal of harm, not to mention the harm that it has done already; for I doubt not, that if some weak believer was to hear you preach against this doctrine of doubts and fears, but that it might harm him; for in place of abolishing doubts and fears, your doctrine rather increases them: for you saying that no believer ever did or could doubt of his salvation, and at the same time the weak believer knowing in his own mind, that he had been in doubts and fears several times, it is ten to one but he would conclude, that he was not a real believer, otherwise he could not have doubted of his salvation, and this thought

thought might put him almost to distraction, and till such time as the spirit of God confirmed his interest in Christ, his case would be truly lamentable ; but if an experienced soldier in Christ's service was to hear you, he would laugh at your subtilty ; for he would know that you might as well say, that he could not have a soul in his body, as to say that he could not have doubts and fears.

BUT I think I hear you saying, *that perfect love casteth out fear* ; and I know experimentally that it does cast out fear ; for when I have had his glorious presence with me, I have been so sweetly allured with love to God and his commandments, that I did not fear him from a slavish fear, but feared him as a child feareth his father, for I knew that he would do me no harm, and that if he did chastise me it would be for my good, even as a father correcteth and chastiseth his own son ; but when clouds has come between my

father and me, the case was altered, as you may see by what I have said above; for it is a mistake to say that a believer has always perfect love, for he that at one time can appeal to his Saviour and say, *Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee.* Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended. Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. At another time he may deny his master with an oath, and curse and swear; this is on record, to teach the godly, *Not to be high minded, but fear. Let he that standeth take heed lest he fall.* Hitherto I have been taking notice, what harm your doctrine may do on the one hand, let us now see what harm it may do on the other hand; it may cause people to quench all doubts and fears, that may arise concerning whether they be in the faith or not, and cause them to think they are in the faith, when they really are not; and it may lead them into a kind of presumptive boldness, so as they may



may call peace peace, when there is no peace, &c. In short, the more a person looks into your doctrine, the worse he must like it. You try to hide your venom under the name of Bereans, but what right you have to that name I know not, for we are told, Acts xvii. 11, 12. *That those of Berea were more noble than those of Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether these things were so. And that many of them believed.* Hence we may be assured that they had right notions of scripture: and sure am I that if these Bereans were alive now, they would confess that they had experienced their good and bad days, the presence of God, and the absence of God, assurance of God's love at one time, doubts and fears at another, as well as other saints. The Almighty has various ways of dealing with his people, some do walk much in the light of God's countenance, others are all their days kept in bondage

through fear of death, Heb. ii. 15. You must excuse me for making so free with you, as to tell you, that I think your proper name would be Anti-Bereans; for you seem rather to be against those that search the scriptures, than with them. But let us see what Isaiah saith, Is. l. 10. 'Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.' You see here is the character of the person described, he fears the Lord, yet he is walking in darkness and hath no light. But it is needless for me to say any more upon the subject, for this piece is got larger on my hand than I at first intended; and you may see that I have taken but a few testimonies of scripture, out of many that freely offer themselves: and I really think that if you have not willingly shut your eyes against the truth, you must be convinced of the truth of this doctrine that I have been defending

defending. For I think I have sufficiently proved from scripture, experience and reasoning, that true believers have at times doubted of their salvation; and it remains now that you prove to the contrary. Shew me from scripture, that there never was a believer from the creation of the world to this present time, that ever had the least doubt of his salvation, but was constantly assured of his eternal salvation, even when he had fallen into the commission of great sins; shew me this from scripture, and I will give up all that I have said. But for as much as you exclaim against the church, yet I think that it will be my wisdom to continue by the church of Scotland, till such time as I shall find a better.

If you or any that shall see this small treatise, shall fancy that I have wrote these few hints of my experience, out of mere ostentation and vanity, I shall only say, that such persons are very little acquainted with either my inclinations

nations or temper. However, seeing I have been long ago sensible, that it is as impossible for any man to stop all men's mouths, as it is for him to satisfy & convince all men's judgments; so since ever I attempted to write upon religious subjects, I have firmly resolved (especially being conscious of my own sincerity and innocence,) to stand proof against all such censorious and cavilling assaults whatsoever; for I assure you, that whatever you may think of this performance, that it was wrote from the heart, and with a good intent; and God grant that you may be benefited by it, for Christ's sake, AMEN.



F I N I S.

## TO THE PUBLIC.

**S**OME people has told me, that I should not have mentioned any thing concerning my experience ; for that they had known several people that had wrote their experience, that afterwards led but very indifferent lives. Indeed I am conscious of my own weakness and infirmities, the many temptations I may meet with from the Devil, the world and the flesh ; nay what did I say, all the armies in hell are up in arms against me, whenever I set my face heavenward. But regardless of all the enemies of my soul, and in hope that God's presence will be with me, and keep me from ever being a scandal to religion, I have not only ventured to write a few hints of my experience, but I intend to be that ventorious, as to write at large what God has done for my soul, from the earliest period of my life that I can remember, to the present time : wherein I intend to take notice of the most remarkable providence of God towards me, both spiritual and temporal ; together with all the arguments I have had with Papists, Arians, Socinians or Unitarians, Arminians or Methodists, Quakers, Bereans, &c. The arguments on both sides will be fairly stated ; for I have not knowingly evaded the strength of any argument that ever

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was brought against me, to my knowledge. I mean also to give a brief description of the four religions in the world ; together with the tenets of a number of different sectaries in religion. And as there are a set of men amongst us, that deny the Trinity, the Divinity of Christ, &c. I mean to prove the Trinity, the Divinity of Christ, Predestination, the perseverance of the saints, and a number of other precious truths from scripture, and sound reasoning, too tedious to mention here. I mean also to affix a small Glossary at the end, to give an explanation of all the obscure words that may occur in the work, in order that every one may understand them.

THE whole of this work will be contained in twelve Numbers, and will be delivered to Subscribers, at Sixpence each Number : The work will be put to the press as soon as a competent number of subscriptions are obtained. This work although wrote by an unworthy person, yet I hope it will be of service to the church of Christ, as well as to convince worldlings that there is a reality in religion, although they have never experienced it.



